

**D38 (Cont. from 1)**

take a college entrance exam to demonstrate their qualifications.

Upchurch questioned the wording that guidance counselors have the final say on whether a student may take such a class. She asked whether a student would have the opportunity to challenge the decision to the principal or other individual.

Executive Director of Learning Services Lori Benton said there are strict guidelines for qualification for such classes, and sometimes parents are encouraging students to take too many of such classes in addition to their regular course load. It is in these cases that the counselor sometimes intervenes.

Director Chris Taylor asked whether students who took classes and earned college credit are recognized at graduation or any other way as athletes often are. He wishes the community to

know of such achievements.

Benson responded that students who take advanced placement classes are also not recognized but that the district will consider doing so. Schools that are awarded prizes for academic achievement are recognized at board meetings, and scholarship winners are also recognized.

**Planning related to extended closing**

Somers said that the superintendents of all El Paso County districts have been in frequent contact. It is fortunate that all were to have spring break at the same time, offering the opportunity to add a week off to consider possibilities. (It has since been decided by the governor to limit all groups to 10 or fewer.)

Board Vice President Theresa Phillips asked Somers to explain the concept of distance learning during the closure.

Somers said that he is working with instructional coaches and others to create a continuity of learning for all ages. Resources at the elementary level include Reading Plus, which allows students to work at their own pace. Teachers can assign specific modules daily or offer weekly lesson plans. Grades will not be assigned during this period. Students needing special support pose a challenge. High school teachers will contact their students individually, he said.

Somers said he recognizes that some teachers have strategies to share. Principals were to meet virtually the day after the board meeting.

Upchurch asked whether there were plans regarding school plays or other long-term projects.

Somers responded that all is being put on hold. It might be possible to resume rehearsals when school reopens. The virus leaves the district completely without control of the timing of the rest of the academic year.

Upchurch asked how the board and parents could support Somers. He said he feels the support of the community and urges all to acknowledge that students are going through a rough situation. The district will strive to provide

clarity through frequent communication. Please go to the district website, lewispalmer.org, for updates.

Taylor asked what provisions the district is making for nutrition during the closure.

Somers responded that the district was able to create 250 meals from supplies already in the district's kitchen. The district donated all of its fresh produce and milk to Tri-Lakes Cares. Emails were sent to families who qualify for free/reduced price lunch, and the pick-up point is Tri-Lakes Cares. Sixty families had already contacted Tri-Lakes Cares. He also said that students under 18 may pick up meals from various locations in the county, detailed on the Meal Map on the website.

Board President Matthew Clawson said that everything the district is doing is to protect the students. He has read some recommendations that schools close for eight weeks.

Regarding testing, Somers said that all assessments are on hold and none has been sent to the district. Testing is not a focus at this time. The state is weighing the decision.

Taylor asked whether there would be medical screening of students and staff on their return.

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